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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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PA Elections: Hamas Victory

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Key stories in the media:  
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All media bannered Hamas's overwhelming victory in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections. Hamas reaped 76 seats in the PLC, while Fatah gained only 43 seats in the legislature. Major media reported that Ismail Haniyeh, a Hamas leader in Gaza, is likely to become the next Palestinian PM. The three major Hebrew dailies led with Acting PM Ehud Olmert's comment following a high-level security meeting he held on Thursday afternoon: "A Hamas-led Palestinian Authority is no partner." This morning, Israel Radio reported that Israel has decided to transfer a monthly payment of social dues to the PA. Ha'aretz reported earlier that Olmert had decided he would delay the transfer of the funds. Leading media reported that at the meeting, cabinet members sharply criticized IDF Intelligence and the Shin Bet for not having predicted the makeover. All media reported that Hamas ruled out talks with Israel and that Fatah declined Hamas's offer to participate in a Hamas-led government.

Major media reported that during a news conference on Thursday, President Bush praised the Palestinian democratic process. The media further quoted him as addressing Hamas: "But I will continue to remind people ... that if your platform is the destruction of Israel, it means you're not a partner in peace. And we're interested in peace." Leading media quoted Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as saying Thursday via videoconference to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland: "We offer our congratulations to President Abbas and the Palestinian people on an election process that was peaceful and free of violence." The Secretary was also quoted as saying that the U.S. has not changed its position on Hamas. Israel Radio reported that senior Quartet representatives -- UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Secretary Rice, Russian FM Sergey Lavrov, and EU policy chief Javier Solana -- held telephone consultations on Thursday and that they are slated to meet in London on Monday. The radio reported that FM Tzipi Livni talked on the phone with foreign ministers, including Secretary Rice. The Jerusalem Post reported that on Thursday, Livni met with EU Mideast envoy Marc Otte and that Olmert later met with Quartet representative James Wolfensohn. The Jerusalem Post reported that on Thursday, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, the head of the international monitoring team of the PLC elections, urged the international community to fund the new PA government even though it will be led by an internationally declared terrorist organization. The Jerusalem Post and other media cited the EU as saying that Hamas must recognize Israel and renounce violence if it wants to maintain relations with Europe.

Ha'aretz quoted Hebron settlers as saying on Thursday that the IDF plans to declare the Jewish section of Hebron a closed military area this morning, in

preparation for the evacuation of nine Jewish families from the city's wholesale market. The newspaper reported that the settlers, who believe that the evacuation is slated to take place next week, are planning a major solidarity conference Tuesday against the proposed move.

Ha'aretz reported that on Thursday, IDF soldiers shot dead a nine-year-old Palestinian girl along Israel's border with the Gaza Strip. This was the second time a Palestinian child was killed this week.

The media reported that on Thursday, the Knesset's House Committee formally approved the split in the Shinui faction. Eleven of the faction's Knesset members, headed by former party head Yosef (Tommy) Lapid and his deputy, Avraham Poraz, will from now on be known as the "Secular Faction." The name "Shinui" will be kept by the three remaining MKs, Ehud Ratzabi, Ilan Leibowitz, and Yigal Yasinov.

Expanding on its disclosure on Thursday, Yediot (Ronen Bergman) wrote that Sudan was the country in which Osama bin Laden was staying when the Mossad and a unit of IDF Intelligence planned to assassinate him. The newspaper said that Israeli intelligence had been helping investigate an attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Ethiopia and came across a group of radicals based in Sudan and led by bin Laden. The newspaper said that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak threatened to take military measures against Sudan when he got wind of who was behind the assassination attempt, that Sudan subsequently gave in to the Egyptian threats, and that Iranian intelligence and bin Laden started relocating the terrorists from Sudan.

Ha'aretz reported that on Thursday, Professor Klaus Schwab, the chairman and executive director of the Davos World Economic Forum, offered a sweeping apology to all delegates for an article calling for the boycott of Israel that appeared in Global Agenda, a "prestigious magazine" issued by the forum. Ha'aretz reported that some American Jewish leaders attending the conference said they were not satisfied with the apology.

Maariv quoted a former official in the Israeli defense establishment as saying in a research paper written for Tel Aviv University that 220 Israeli companies are engaged in selling weapons and military equipment around the world -- with support from the Defense Ministry.

All media reported on International Holocaust Memorial Day, which is commemorated today throughout the world for the first time.

Ha'aretz quoted U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia as saying in a lecture at Tel Aviv University on Thursday that judges are not experts on policy, and that they should not make decisions on questions of values and morality over which the public is divided.

A Yediot/Mina Zemach (Dahaf Institute) poll conducted on Thursday:  
-"How should Israel relate to the PA if Hamas controls its government?" Speak with it: 48 percent; disconnect from it: 43 percent.  
-"How should Israel relate to the PA if Hamas takes part in the government?" Speak with it: 67 percent; disconnect from it: 28 percent.

Maariv printed the results of a TNS/Teleseker Polling Institute survey conducted on Thursday:  
-"Following Hamas's victory in the elections, and assuming that it will form the next Palestinian government, how do you believe Israel should act?"  
Announce that Israel is prepared to negotiate with Hamas, but only after the latter announces that it is canceling its desire to eliminate Israel: 40 percent;  
totally disconnect with the PA, freeze diplomatic negotiations, and resume assassinations of senior Hamas members: 29 percent; continue to act as usual and work to resume negotiations in accordance with the American Roadmap: 27 percent.  
-"Regardless of your personal view, do you believe that a new disengagement in Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank] -- including an evacuation of settlements -- will be carried out? Yes: 66 percent; no: 25 percent.

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PA Elections: Hamas Victory:  
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Summary:

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Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Israel does not always have to be dragged after the whims of the U.S. administration."

Editor-in-Chief Amnon Dankner wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv: "We are faced with a Palestinian leadership that, unlike Arafat and his heirs, does not hide behind a mask."

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "The tendency in Washington is to do as they do in Lebanon -- maintain contact with the government, but not with ministers from Hizbullah. All this will change if Hamas forms the next Palestinian government."

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "We should hold the new Palestinian government to the standard the old one should have been held to: no fight against terrorism, no money."

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in Ha'aretz: "A clash [between President Bush and] Congress over the issue [of Hamas] is a definite possibility." Nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe editorialized: "The about-face we witnessed during the PA elections teaches us that President Bush's Mideast Roadmap is no longer relevant."

Deputy Managing Editor and right-wing columnist Caroline B. Glick wrote in The Jerusalem Post: "The failure of Israel's leadership is one of the most significant causes of Hamas's ascension to political power."

#### Block Quotes:

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#### I. "Get Used To Them"

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (January 27): "The immediate requisite conclusion is disengagement. The Israeli governments have maintained a love/hate relationship with the senior members of Fatah. They fought with them, scorned them, worked with them, made deals, collected memories, and learned to laugh at the same jokes. All this is over now. The relations between Israel and Hamas are saturated with one ingredient: blood.... One of the most painful diplomatic errors of Sharon's government was its conduct vis-a-vis the U.S. administration on the matter of the [Palestinian] elections. Israel, says a senior government source, could not oppose the demand of the U.S. administration to enable the elections to be held. That may be true. But Israel had to fight for its demand to exact an entrance fee from Hamas. It did not pay any price: not a commitment to refrain from terror; not recognition of Israel nor consent to the road map; it won the jackpot in the lottery without even buying a ticket. Israel does not always have to be dragged after the whims of the U.S. administration. At least from the standpoint of exporting democracy, the Bush administration, acts superficially and with poor judgment. Obeying its dictates has a price.... It is possible that the upheaval in Palestinian politics will impact the mood of the Israeli voter. Netanyahu has a certain opportunity here. But 2006 is not 1996: it is difficult to envision Hamas dictating the outcome of the elections here. There may be a certain consolation in the midst of the harsh feelings. A four-month election campaign has been forced upon the Israelis. There is consolation in the fact that the most important election event -- the most dramatic one -- is already behind them."

#### II. "They've Removed the Masks"

Editor-in-Chief Amnon Dankner wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv (January 27): "As always, there are people with rose-tinted spectacles, who think that Hamas will become so moderate that it will become possible to do business with it. They fondly hope that Hamas will suppress the prevailing anarchy among the Palestinians, that Hamas will stop indulging in terrorism, and that Israel will be willing to talk to Hamas as a result of all this. This is so naive that it is stupid. The only consolation that can be gained from the change is that now there is no doubt about whom we are dealing with. Now we are faced with a Palestinian leadership that, unlike Arafat and his heirs, does not hide behind a mask. It does not pretend

to be seeking law and order. It shows its true face, warts and all. The government has no choice but to declare that it cannot conduct any dialogue with a Palestinian Authority led by Hamas. After this declaration we can afford to take a deep breath and to wait and see what happens. What will the Americans do when Bush and Condi recover from their confusion and disappointment, what will the Europeans mumble, and what will emerge about the connection between Hamas and Iran if the prediction that the Palestinian Authority will sink into a long and bloody dark age of gang warfare comes true? Perhaps the less extremist elements in the Palestinian Authority are capable of recognizing a near civil-war situation only when it jumps at them from the ballot box."

### III. "Terrorists En Route to Government"

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (January 27): "It is not true that the U.S. administration told Israel that Hamas participation in a Palestinian government would lead to the cancellation of the administration's cooperation with that government. The tendency in Washington is to do as they do in Lebanon -- maintain contact with the government, but not with ministers from Hizbullah. All this will change if Hamas forms the next Palestinian government. Then the issue will be a matter of principle, because a Hamas-led government automatically cancels the road map plan and the Oslo accords -- unless the organization adopts Mahmoud Abbas' approach. Without such a change, a Hamas government will not be able to run the PA and maintain the welfare and well-being of the Palestinian population."

### IV. "A Terrorist Regime?"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (January 27): "We should recognize the Palestinian people's democratic accomplishment, without accepting their desperate choice of saviors. Indeed, we should hold the new Palestinian government to the standard the old one should have been held to: no fight against terrorism, no money. Since a terrorist organization -- the very group the PA was required to disarm -- has become the new regime, this should mean an immediate cutoff of all financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority. The temptation will be to give the new regime a trial period and only then to issue an ultimatum. That would be a terrible mistake."

### V. "A Hamas Headache For Bush"

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in Ha'aretz (January 27): "This is a midterm election year in the United States, and the remote possibility that either the Senate or the House will be captured by the Democrats will play a role in every move that is taken during the months ahead.... The Democrats will enjoy a two-fold benefit, with the possibility of assailing Bush from both the right and the left. From the right, because he consented to the presence of Hamas in the Palestinian government and failed in the efforts to have the organization disarmed. And from the left ... because his democratization project is creating more problems than solutions.... A clash with Congress over this issue is a definite possibility.... The trap of micromanagement is one in which American policy falls into time and again."

VI. "The Makeover in the Palestinian Authority" Nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe editorialized (January 27): "The makeover in the PA elections, with Hamas's victory, has utterly changed Middle Eastern reality. It suddenly canceled the plans being made in the White House, on one hand, and in the government compound in Jerusalem on the other, to advance the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.... The question is whether Jerusalem will coordinate its policy with Washington, or whether it will follow an independent diplomatic line.... The about-face we witnessed during the PA elections teaches us that President Bush's Mideast Roadmap is no longer relevant. We have moved away from peace. War clouds have fast come close to the region."

### VII. "The Anatomy of Hamas's Victory"

Deputy Managing Editor and right-wing columnist Caroline B. Glick wrote in The Jerusalem Post (January 27): "On Thursday we awoke to a new reality: Hamas is the official leader of the Palestinians Authority and -- thanks to the U.S. and Israeli governments -- the official representative of Arab Jerusalemites.... The failure of Israel's leadership is one of the most

significant causes of Hamas's ascension to political power, just as the persistence of radical regimes in Damascus is the result on the inability of the international community to rise to the challenge they manifest to international security, so too, the empowerment of Hamas is the result of the adoption of a strategy by Israel that is based on how we wish the world to be rather than on the way the world actually is. By the same token, Israel's ability to fashion suitable responses to Hamas's electoral victory is dependent on its citizens' willingness to choose leaders capable of accepting the realities we face and acting accordingly."

JONES